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MARGUERITE

... OR ...

A WILD FLOWER.

BY

ROSE ANNA LEIGH.

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MARGUERITE, OR A WILD FLOWER

By ROSE ANNA LEIGH.

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CHAPTER I.

THE WILD FLOWER.

"Come while in freshness and dew it lies,
To the world that is under the free blue skies;
Leave ye man's home and forget his care,
There breathes no sigh on the day-springs air."

On the picturesque shores of a small, but beautiful lake in the southern part of the State of ——; where hunting and fishing is good, Roland Lee finds himself with his faithful pointer at his side, ready to make good use of the few day's recreation, snatched from his busy life in the city.

He pauses at the water's edge to take in the surroundings before getting into his boat and is filled with deep pleasure at the beautiful scenery. Looking South across the lake are large trees, spreading their graceful branches over the water, making long slanting shadows; the sun is just showing his face over the rugged cliffs to the East; and his red rays thrown on the glassy surface of the lake, reflect long fiery spikes in its depths. Following their direction, and looking still further up the river, a golden sand-bar glistening with broken shells and bright pebbles, projects itself into the water, and on it a huge dead tree, with dark crooked roots upturned in contrast with the white sand and glistening shells.

With the great ideality inherited from his gentle mother, Roland drinks in the pretty scene, and with the keen insight for business, which was a characteristic of his father, he knows there must be game in those dark woods and rugged cliffs, and fish beneath the calm exterior of the lake.

He ceases to gaze longer at the landscape: whistles to his faithful pointer, jumps in the boat and pushes away from the bank with those youthful vigorous strokes, that only those who know and love such sport can understand.

While he pulls vigorously up the stream we will look at our hero. He is somewhat above medium height, having one of those superior faces, which at once shows great intellect and refinement, his eyes are blue with the sparkle of a purpose in them—a firm mouth with light moustache, fair wavy locks above a broad forehead. The face is somewhere called an index to the soul, and here we find it so, for Roland's face is fair and handsome as his soul is good and true.

His father and mother died, leaving him when quite small to the care of an older sister who married a wealthy man, and having no children of her own, lavished her wealth on this brother; letting her loving generous heart go out to him and making him her greatest pride and joy, and he was now at the age of twenty-six one of the most brilliant lawyers in the city of D——. His partner, Mr. Morrell, a fine lawyer many years Roland's senior, pictured for him a very bright future, and a friendship had grown between these two men, that proved to be as lasting as it was uncommon.

Mr. Morrell had sailed for America some years past, with his wife and little three year old daughter, when a storm wrecked the vessel, and they were torn from him, and from every evidence he could gather they were drowned. Since then the only dear friend in the world, so dark to him, was Roland, to him he confided his troubles and found a sympathizing companion.

Often when Roland left the "bachelor's den"—as they called it—in the evenings to attend some affair of the social world; the old man looking at his proud figure and handsome face, would sigh deeply as the thought came to him, that some one might come between them, and end their companionship, the thought made him sad: not so Mrs. Zuber—Roland's proud sister—his college days over, his profession decided, next in importance to her, seemed a wife, and she at once took the selection of one into her own hands, she was so afraid Roland would make an unwise choice, and "spoil everything." He greatly displeased her very often, because he would not fall heedlessly in love with some choice she made for him. But Roland's heart called for something more than pretty faces, sparkling diamonds, horses and carriages; he must find in the woman he chooses for a wife a true and warm heart. His sister's favorites were often educated, beautiful and accomplished; his mental capacities often responded, but his heart had so far failed to do so, there was something always lacking. He must love in his own way and not his sister's, before the fears of his partner would be realized.

Just now he felt no need of any thing to complete his happiness: every sweetheart he had ever thought of for a moment was banished from his mind, he had left them far in the distance behind him, while he is pulling away up the stream, dreaming of deer, wild turkey, ducks, and in fact most any thing but sweethearts.

Seeing an inviting spot, he drew near the bank where the boughs of a large elm reach over and shadow the water; he leisurely unwraps his line, joints his light bamboo rod, ties his boat to a projecting root, and settles himself to patiently wait a pull at his line.

Who of us would not enjoy his situation for an hour or two? the charm of such sport is not in the fish we catch, for sometimes they refuse entirely to bite, but we see the glad green earth with her choicest beauties unfolded around us as far as the eye can reach;

no glare of stone pavements, no rush of rolling wheels, or a throbbing tide of humanity surging by, but a quiet, restful feeling surrounds us, which we cannot describe and never experience in our most quiet moments in the city's glare, there man and man's creations, here nature's God and nature's beauty is over all.

"The stock dove is here in the beechen tree
And the lulling tones of the honey bee;
And the voice of cool waters midst feathery fern
Shedding sweet sounds from some hidden urn."

Ah! but what is that? a sound breaks his reverie, he starts up, a voice, bird-like, wild and sweet, comes floating to him over the water, and as he listens it draws nearer and nearer.

From behind a small clump of trees at a bend in the river above him, floats a canoe, bearing as its freight a young girl standing upright in the boat. One shapely bare foot on the seat, an oar grasped in a small brown hand to steady her, head thrown back and lips apart in song, her face tanned to a brownish hue, but the rich red on her cheeks and lips bring out the beauty of the soft dark eyes, and make the oval-bronzed face, lovely beyond description; her hair flows loosely in the wind and is "neither black, nor yet brown, but that tinge which the air takes at eve in September, when night lingers through a vineyard, from beams of a slow setting sun," it is inclined to fall in long loose curls to her waist, her dress is clean, but of coarsest material and ragged, her short skirt hangs in tatters around the bottom, showing "graceful ankles bare and brown," the loose sleeve falling back leaves bare an arm that would shame that of a goddess, it is so perfect in shape; her body sways gently to the motion of the boat and the rhythm of the song; she looks as though she belonged to the scene so free and so beautiful, as rugged and brown as the rocks that make for her an appropriate back-ground.

Only a moment she stood thus, for when her eyes fell on Roland, with a startled look she quickly pushed the boat ashore, sprang lightly from it, and as a hunted deer with one bound, was

lost from sight in the woods. A more beautiful being Roland had never seen, could he have painted her as she stood, and only done the picture half justice, it would still have been beautiful: he wondered over and over again who she was, where she lived, what she could be doing here, and if she would return. But several days were destined to go by before this wood-nymph crossed his path again, and when she did, it happened in this way.

One bright morning Roland rowed to the opposite side of the lake, moved his boat on the bar and went into the wood for a days' hunt. On returing that afternoon he found he had not fastened the boat securely for it was gone, what should he do? it was too far to swim across, and to stay on that side meant to sleep on the bare ground, and he did not like that, besides to own the truth, he had been watching for a glimpse of that pretty girl again, and he knew she was on the other side. He could see the corner of a small field just across, perhaps some one might be in hearing of a call, so he halloos! at the top of his voice, once, twice, three times and his mouth is open again, when he barely discerns through the dusky twilight, a movement among the flags on the opposite bank, and a boat shoots out on the water, a small graceful figure seated in it and rowing swiftly in his direction, it takes but a few strokes and she is across.

"You are very kind" said Roland as the boat ground on the sand at his feet, and a pair of large shy eyes looked into his face with an expression which meant "I will row you over." And seating himself he again took in the soft outlines and delicate curves of the graceful figure before him: he was unconscious of his rude stare, until the deeper red crept quickly to the surface and spread over the girl's face in a flush of embarrassment.

"You seem accustomed to rowing" he said to cover her confusion.

"Do you live near the lake?"

"Our home is just in the woods there, you can see the garden

fence, daddy heard you call, and thought it was some one in distress, so he sent me with the boat."

She looked at Roland as though she didn't think him in very deep distress, as much as to say if she had known, she wouldn't have come: but he explained his position and made it as distressing as he possibly could, and begged that she allow him to put them both across. He takes the oars but the boat ceases to skim over the water as rapidly as before, partly owing to his unpracticed hand, and partly because he is in no hurry to get to the opposite shore, for he is enjoying his interesting companion.

"Have you always lived here?" asked Roland.

"Yes always, I suppose, at least I came when I was quite small and do not remember any other place. Granny and daddy Ryan lived across the ocean in a great city, but it is nothing like here, nothing so beautiful as this, there it was all houses and people and paved streets."

"Don't you think all that would be nice?"

"Oh! no, not so nice as here for the wild flowers don't bloom there, and there is no lovely lake like this, with ferns and violets, shells and pebbles on its banks, and the wild birds do not sing so sweetly nor the sun shine so bright."

"But" he said "the winter will come around the same here as in the city and then you cannot enjoy all those things out doors."

"Yes the winter does come" she replied with a low rippling laugh as though the thoughts of it brought pleasant recollections. "But then we cuddle close around the fire in our little cottage and keep all snug and warm, and daddy reads and granny and I listen, and piece quilts and knit, and oh! it's so nice."

Roland looked wonderingly at a girl who could be so happy and contented with so little, she was certainly a wonder to him, for all girls he had known, to almost require sun, moon, and stars to make them happy.

"Where did you learn to sing?"

"Oh! I would love so much to know how to sing, but there is no one to learn me, I try sometimes when I'm all alone." She said drooping her head with a pretty smile and blush.

"But you were singing when I saw you first?"

"I was just going like the bird that has its nest in the tree by our door; it sings there every morning, I can go like all the birds, they and the squirrels are all the friends I have, but that is a great many you know, because the woods are full of them."

"I suppose you are very happy here?"

"Yes, only sometimes" and tears gathered in the dark eyes. Roland wondered at this, but they were doubtless very poor and perhaps they were often without the necessities of life and suffered from hunger or cold he felt very sorry for them and asked.

"Poor child, you are in want of something, what is it? tell me that I may aid you."

"Oh no," and she brightened as though she felt no need of his proffered help, she understood his meaning and hastened to reply.

"We have the nice cow and the milk she gives, and the meal from the mill all freshly ground, and I make such nice mush, and then the potatoes and every thing that grows in our garden, and plenty of good enough clothes to wear."

And she glanced down at her cotton dress, with as much content as a fashionable belle would inspect a new ball gown.

"Tell me then why the tears were in your eyes a moment ago."

The shadow came over her face again. He was half sorry he asked, but he felt he must know something of this strange beautiful creature's life.

She bent her head, the amber tinged curls fell over the hands

which clasped her knees and half concealed the tears that fell from her eyes, while she answered so softly, Roland bent nearer that he might catch her words.

"Sometimes the old folks sit apart and talk of death, for they are old and feeble now and say that they must leave me soon, and go to a happier home where I will come too after 'while, but I love them so and oh! I cannot bear to hear them talk that way."

Roland tried to comfort her as best he could, telling her they might live to be with her a long time yet.

They reach the landing, Roland thanks her, asks her name, and she tells him it is Maggie Ryan. And in the hush of the deepening twilight he watches her go along the path into the shadowy wood, until she is lost from sight. There was something charming in her simplicity and a beautiful thought in her unselfish love for those old people; when in her presence he had felt his own selfishness more than ever before.

Sweet child of nature, wealthier by far in thy contentment, than thousands of others, who with the smallest jewel from their casket, could buy twice over, all thy possessions.

CHAPTER II.

CONTENTED WITH ITS LOT.

See'st thou my home? 'tis where yon woods are waving,
In their dark richness, to the summer air;
Where yon blue stream, a thousand flower banks laving,
Leads down the hills a vein of light—'tis there.

Hemans.

A soft June morning, little flying clouds chase one another over the blue sky. The sun bursts forth from behind them making the dew drops glisten like jewels on flowers and grass. A cow lies lazily chewing her cud under a giant elm near a past-

ure gate contentedly waiting the milking time; but not long does she wait, for over the little meadow, fresh and bright as the flowers, comes Maggie.

A squirrel chatters to her from over head, and a mocking bird from the highest bough, warbles his recognition of her presence there. She stops, tosses her curls back and looks up at the bird, and when he has finished, a song similar to his own breaks from her lips, as she trips lightly to the gate, unties the rope that holds it fast, when a footfall causes her to look around.

"Good morning, Maggie!" said Roland "let me return some of your kindness of yesterday by opening this heavy gate.

And while he opened the ponderous gate to let the cow out, he spoke of the fine day and regretted the loss of his boat as the game was more plentiful on the other side; and she said he could have their boat, granny was sick and daddy could not go fishing that day. Then Maggie went home to drive the cow, and Roland for his hunting and fishing equipments, he was soon ready and at the boat landing, when Maggie's voice made him look around.

"Mr. Lee I have brought some breakfast for bunnie's babies, will you please feed them for me, they are just in the hollow of the big pecan tree where the path first enters the wood, I am always there every day by this time and they will be waiting and hungry."

Roland could hardly suppress a laugh when she took from her apron, which she had been holding up all the while, a handful of corn and a queer little gourd like a cup with a handle, and reached both towards him.

"What is this for?" he asked turning the gourd over in his hands.

"Oh! they must have a drink you know, and they are such dear little things, I know you will think so when you see them."

It was a new idea to send Roland to feed the squirrels, when he was hunting them to kill them.

"I'm afraid I can't find them, the place is new to me, would it not be best for you to come and attend to them yourself."

"If I may, but will you wait for me?" and she goes quickly to the house, but soon returns with and old straw hat on, looking the veritable Maud Muller, for beneath the torn hat glowed the wealth of simple beauty and rustic health, a stray lock of hair had found its way out of a hole in the crown, and the old scalloped brim, matched well her ragged gown, her cheeks glowed and her eyes sparkled with pleasure.

Roland was bewildered at such dazzling beauty and forgetting all else, stood looking wonderingly at her.

"I'm ready now" she said, grasping the brim of her hat on each side in order to settle it more firmly on her head.

When seated in the boat, Roland began talking of the squirrels again. "Can't the squirrels take care of themselves?"

"No! you see some wicked hunter killed bunnie before the little ones were big enough to do for themselves and I found them—and have fed them every day—they are almost grown now but they wait for me. I will show you the red robin's nest, it is not far off—and one egg will be hatched to-day, and such little balls of down when they first come out."

"Yes, I shall be delighted to see them, but how do you know a bird will come out of the shell to-day?".

"Because it is just two weeks to-day since she laid the first egg. I was afraid I couldn't come—but you"—and not knowing how to express herself she drooped her pretty head and blushed.

After landing Maggie took the lead swinging along in an easy graceful way; she is a very unusual character, but still constantly reminds Roland of some one. She talks about the birds and their young families, the flowers and the fishes and was

well up in the lore of her world, and had such stores of knowledge concerning it, that Roland felt his wisdom in that line very deficient, and finds himself an interested and humble listener to things that only a child of nature, and one who had lived in constant contact with nature can know or impart.

Roland in his nicely fitting hunting suit, dignified carriage and polite bearing, which city life and culture has given him is also a wonder to this simple child, and when he speaks of his world, its ways, and people she in her turn is silent.

So these two beings so very unlike, are each an interesting companion for the other: and as Roland tells of his home, friends, city and so many things unknown to Maggie, when they stop to listen to the mocking bird and watch it flutter in the air to reach its highest notes, Maggie tells of its home and habits, the worms it regards as daintiest fare, and many of its habits, unknown to Roland and he wonders how she found them all out.

They reach the hollow tree, and out comes bunnie's babies, but they are not at all like baby squirrels, large, fat and young with big bushy tails and they chattered noisily over the corn which Maggie held out to them, running over her shoulders and down her arms to drink the water from the gourd, and when Roland steps in sight they look shy and run into their nest again, peeping out very cautiously; their reception of him, causes Maggie's silvery laugh to echo through the woods.

Thus, pleasantly they pass the morning, and return, but before separating Roland has Maggie's promise to show him some interesting places on the morrow. She is familiar with each place of interest for many miles around and is able to direct him to places, that in his limited stay would have been overlooked. The loveliest spot of all, containing—as Maggie declared—more treasures than any other, was a little gorge or cavern; running back far into the mountain. Craggy rocks reached up its sides, out of whose crevices grew great cactus, small stunted cedars and

wild ivy; but down in its bed rippled a little laughing brook, over mossy rocks and making fertile and fresh, beds of violets and ferns. Croaking frogs jumped about on the damp green moss, and looked like they thought Maggie and Roland trespassers on their private grounds. A crow cawed at them from the limb of a dead cedar above them.

Tired and warm they stoop down and drink from the stream, then seat themselves on the stones to rest; it is with a feeling of solemn awe and reverence they look around them, each feeling a loneliness apart as it were from all the world; she with her devotion for the old people whose companionship and love was all she had ever known, still their youth had so long since passed away, no feeling in common with her young heart remained; so exiled from a congenial spirit she had heretofore enjoyed these scenes alone.

Roland with a man's true heart, loved simplicity and sincerity, but he had never found it in any of those into whose society his sister had led him, it seemed nearer the truth here now with this gentle, true hearted child beside him, the blue of heaven above, the gurgling stream at his feet, and floating over all the perfume of violets, a happy and contented feeling stole around him that he had not known before: as the sun went down and twilight stole softly over all, they arose to go, he looked into the brown eyes beside him, and saw there the sweet light of a similar pleasure akin to his own, and involuntarily clasped her in his arms and passionately pressed a burning kiss on her cheek. Her heart throbbed, a warm flush dyes her face, she knows not why, but who of us can give reason for or understand love when it first touches the heart, as the lily bud feels the warmth of the sun and gently unfolds each perfumed petal, drinking in the shining rays, so the human heart to the love that first warms it.

Next morning Roland lingers before starting on his day's hunt, for Maggie does not come as usual to the pasture gate nor the boat landing and he misses the brown eyes and sweet voice, so with lagging steps he starts out.

Night draws in after a tiresome day and finds our hero foot-sore and weary with several miles yet between him and camp, with ominous clouds gathering thick and fast overhead, and soon a storm of rain and wind burst forth upon him in all its fury, branches crash and fall about him obstructing his pathway; the night grows into such thick darkness that he soon loses all idea of the direction in which to go, stopping to shield himself for a few minutes near the trunk of a large tree when a heavy limb would crash and break, falling at his feet, he would realize his unsafe position, and by a flash of lightening find his way a few steps onward, this he kept up it seemed to him for an hour or two, when the storm abated, and a glimmer of light in the distance, told him a house was not far off, and he at once went in the direction soon reaching it, looking through the half open door he saw a strange scene, it is the home of the fisherman for there in the corner of the room a bed on which lies the withered form of an old woman, whose sunken eyes and pale face show she is ill; kneeling on the bare floor beside the bed is the bent form of an old gray haired man and beside a chair with face upturned in the soft glow of the firelight is Marguerite,

"Hush 'tis a holy hour—the quiet room
Seems like a temple, while yon soft lamp sheds
A faint and starry radiance, through the gloom
And the sweet stillness, down on fair young heads,
With all their clustering locks, untouched by care,
And bowed as flowers are bowed with night, in prayer."

Her soft brown eyes and perfect mouth wearing a solemn expression, different from what Roland had even seen on her face, making her look more woman than child. Ah! thought Roland how beautiful she is and how good.

The last words of the prayer spoken in the trembling voice of the old man was audible; 'Oh! spare her to us yet awhile, we know at best it will not be long, but not now oh: Lord not now; And Heaven be merciful and take not from us our greatest blessing our pride and joy our Maggie; we are afraid that she may

grow tired of this dull life, and be tempted away from us, Heaven forbid! guide the stranger that wanders on our shores and bless him we ask for Jesus' sake. Amen.

Marguerite rose quickly and went to the bed where the old man still knelt, and dropping down beside him, put her arm gently around his neck, and kissed his withered cheek, saying, "Daddy, you needn't pray that way any more, for nothing will tempt me to leave you, never think of that daddy, for I will stay with you always; who is there for me to love and care for but you and granny?"

Little she knew how soon the temptation would come.

Roland was a stranger to scenes like this, but his memory went far back in his childhood, when he used to kneel each night by his mother's side, and repeat the childish prayer she taught him: he would not disturb them so he turned away with tears in his eyes—and sought his camp.

Since his mother's death he had been striving for learning, fame and wealth, crowding out of his mind all thoughts of Heaven and God, while here were these humble people, believing and relying on Him from day to day, trusting in His promises and following meekly in His footsteps and finding true happiness and contentment, while he knew neither. Many thoughts such as these came to him while he lay comparing his life and theirs, these people were wretchedly poor yet they didn't seem to know it, they were so contented: how easy it would be for that lovely Marguerite with her rare voice, to make a fortune for them all: he might give her a start, put it into her head to go, and furnish her the money, why not do it? but a repulsive feeling crept into his breast: it would be a sin to disturb them, they were happy here, and the life beyond these hills and vales they knew nothing of; but Roland did, it was cruel and cold and what did gold do for you when won, but crowd the warm love and pure affections from the heart: and was not the beautiful devotions of this strang-

ly united family, whose heart strings were wound about one another, more to be valued than gold? would he be the one to tear them asunder? No! Would to Heaven such a pure life unspotted from the world, had been his own; with good resolves for the morrow, and life in the future, he falls asleep.

Next morning Marguerite comes with a sad face to tell Roland granny is no better and will eat nothing she prepares for her, so he goes for some birds and brings them to the house and each day afterwards he sees that their wants are supplied and is a frequent visitor at the cottage. Somehow he had lost interest in hunting and fishing since Marguerite could no longer go along; he wondered at himself and resolved to go out and have a whole day of it once more. He soon became weary, it was warm and dusty, he had gotten a few birds for granny Ryan and somehow he kept thinking about going back, he didn't see anything else but squirrels and he imagined each one looked like Marguerite's pets so he would not kill them.

At last he threw himself down under a spreading oak, and gave way to pleasant day-dreams such as this, "how pretty she is and how good, I wish I was a poor miller's or fisherman's son, I would win her heart and hand, build a little cottage here and how happy I might be with her as my little wife. I believe I love that sweet wild flower, that Marguerite. I would have gone home long ago but I dread the thought of never seeing her again—some indescribable charm holds me to this place—I cannot leave—her eyes—gazelles—a fairy isle—where thou and I might dwell—alone" and with these thoughts Roland dropped to sleep and passsed into the real land of dreams. He knew not how long he slept, but when he awoke, beside him her ragged old hat far back on her head, sat Marguerite gazing intently into his face. As Roland opened his sleepy eyes to hers, he wondered if he is still dreaming, or is it true he is the poor fisherman and she his own, and he reached out and took one of the little brown hands in his, yes he was awake and she really there beside him.

She had been looking for wood with which to cook the evening meal, when she found Roland there asleep, she had childishly lain down her wood and seated herself to wait for him. So he got up and they start for home he putting the game bag over her shoulders, taking care to lift the curls so the strap will lie beneath them, for it was one of Roland's chief joys to watch them blow about her rosy face; he was a little longer about it than necessary, he wished to ask her something but he felt it might be wrong but just to see if she liked him the least bit he said:

"Marguerite, would you care if I went away?"

For an answer her apron went to her eyes and she began to cry; he knew then that she cared for him, and he knew also that he had it in his power to make the poor girl's life happy or miserable and he must be careful.

"Oh! don't cry Margie, I'm not going now, I just want to know if you cared." And he took the apron from her hands and wiped away the tears that were all shed for him, and told him better than words could ever do that she loved him.

The cloud passed when the shower of tears had fallen, and the sun came forth more radiant than before.

He shouldered gun and wood, while Marguerite gathered flowers by the way, as they went homeward bound through the dusky twilight.

CHAPTER III.

THE TEMPTATION.

Sweet vale of Avoca, how calm could I rest,
In thy bosom of shade with the friends I love best;
Where the storms that we feel in this cold world should cease
And our hearts like thy waters be mingled in peace.

Moore.

Several days have elapsed between this and the last chapter, and Roland realizes his holidays must end, he must go back to

business and cares, society and its hollow pleasures. No more wandering in the woods with Marguerite, no more gathering shells and finding bear tracks in the golden sand, no more wild flowers to be gathered, daisies, butter-cups and violets: no more would the brown eyes of Marguerite look up each day trustingly into his own. Would he miss them? Ah! he knew not how much: but he knows already that this parting will be the first trial of his life.

It was late that evening when he returned, but he went as he had done each day since the old lady's illness, to the cabin with game for the evening meal.

He had tied a hammock under the trees by the door, here he had swung Marguerite to and fro, while her sweet voice had rang out on the still night air in strange little songs. And to-night he found her there, and as he came a step nearer, he saw she was asleep and he thought she looked more beautiful than he had ever seen her. One bare perfect arm thrown above her head, her lips seemed smiling in dreams, the hammock swayed slightly in the gentle breeze, and the soft moonlight played over her face through the openings in the foliage above. He leaned over her nearer and nearer, he bent his head until her breath fanned his cheek. He was to part with her on the morrow, would it be wrong to press his lips to hers this once? Oh! the temptation should he resist it? Yes, he could not risk her displeasure on this last evening they were to enjoy together. His presence so near had awakened her, she stirred and opened her eyes.

"Margie, wake up and see what I've brought!" said Roland as innocently as if he had never thought of stealing a kiss; handing her the bag of game, she takes the birds out one by one smoothing their ruffled feathers, kissing their heads, saying all manner of loving things to them, until Roland declared he would like to be a dead bird. They enter the cabin, where he shares their frugal meal, and kneels with them this last time in their humble devotion. He lingered awhile and then said "good

night," and while he held Marguerite's hand a moment, said in low but earnest tones, "Be at the landing in the morning, Marguerite, I have something to tell you," and he was gone.

Bounding along the path in the early morning comes Maggie, wondering all the while what it can be that Roland is going to say to her, it might be an excursion in the woods or another long boat ride, but somehow his tones had a sound of sadness in them; and now as she approaches him while he stands there waiting, she thinks he wears a sad look and her joyous feelings all vanish, she slackens her steps and he comes to meet her with outstretched hands.

"Good morning, Marguerite!" in a sad tone still holding her hands in his.

"Good morning, Mr. Lee."

"Call me Roland, Margie, for we have been good friends for a long time, have we not? and I'm going to say good bye to you Margie for we must part to-day."

Her eyes sought his face and a bewildered look came into them as though she scarcely understood what he said.

"I must leave you to-day, my little friend, and go back to my home in the city."

A cry of anguish broke from her lips, and she sank down weeping as though her heart would break. Roland was not prepared for this, he could hardly bear the thought that he must be the cause of this sorrow: and Maggie knew not until then, that so much of the life of her life, half unknown to herself, had been silently settled on one from whom parting would be almost death.

Roland shuddered as he looked at the drooping figure of the girl at his feet: he should have gone before now, but he could not, the trial to him was great—but he knew best how to bear it, he was the strongest; he knew now that he loved this rude child of nature, but what would her life be but misery in the midst of his friends, she could barely read or write, they would scorn her.

Oh, Heaven! the only way left was to forget her if possible.

"Marguerite, why do you weep so?" she raised her pleading tear stained face to his.

"Oh! Roland" she sobbed "Please do not go away—do not leave me—I cannot bear it—I've been so happy since you came, do not go"—

He raised her from the ground, put his arms gently around her, and pressing her to his aching heart and smoothed back her disordered curls.

"Don't weep any more, sit here beside me and let us have a long friendly talk, like we have had so often."

But conflicting emotions filled his breast, he felt he could not leave her, yet how could he take her—yes, she was a child, and he a man, and his was the duty, to act reasonable and not blindly; yet here beside him, with her beautiful tear stained face, this darling girl, oh! how he longed to throw reason to the winds, clasp her to his breast, and swear never from her to be separated as long as life lasts, but it would only bring sorrow and misery in the end, he must wait—he must give her up, but he would come again—so calming himself he said kindly.

"Marguerite, my good little friend listen to what I have to say to you," her sobs ceased but her head lay quite still and heavy against his breast, "Let me take you to the city to school, where you can learn a great deal, in books about everything, and you can learn music, and your nice voice can be trained, and I will be so proud of my little girl and so will daddy and granny Ryan; at mention of their names she raised her head and asked.

"Can they go, too?"

"No!" answered Roland "But you can come back to see them sometimes and after you get through going to school, you can come back here if you like or they can come to you. She seemed to be thinking.

"No!" at last she answered, I see it all now, I can't do that,"

raising her head in a proud way, new to him, and brushing the tears from her eyes.

"Mr. Lee, I must not listen to you any more, could I think for a moment of causing a sorrow, in the few short days of those old people's lives; you know I'm all they have on earth, their only joy and comfort. Who would cheer their drooping spirits? Who would nurse them in their sickness? and be ears for their dull hearing, and eyes for their dim sight? No one! Ah! one week of my absence would be to them an eternity of gloom; yes, I see it all, we must part, your world, your people, your duty lies yonder," pointing over the lake "And mine here." "Good bye, Roland forever," holding out her hand.

"Oh! Marguerite darling, do not say forever." He would have clasped her in his arms but she restrained him.

"Would you have me act differently and so sadden the last days of those who have protected and cared for me all my life? I cannot leave them as long as they live."

"Marguerite forgive me, but I love you, Heaven only knows how well, be kind to me in this last hour together, tell me that you love me, before we part, and that I may come again?"

A breath of wind blew the brown curls over his face and as he pressed them to his lips, she whispered softly, "Yes, I know it, I love you Roland Lee:" a deep blush overspread her face and she ran quickly away: but when out of sight she began to think and slackened her steps to a walk—she hardly moves and at length stops altogether, her bosom is heaving, her hands clasped, and a sad face upturned to Heaven, it is her first temptation, and a great one. Roland on one hand offering her the only means by which she can gain his level, or ever hope to become his bride, on the other two feeble old people trusting to her for comfort in their declining years; she stood thus a moment only, then went her way quickly to the cabin, a triumphant if a sadder Marguerite.

Why did she weep so that night when daddy Ryan prayed for Roland Lee? why did she sob herself to sleep, and wake with thoughts of him at early dawn? Love is the answer to it all.

Medicine has no power to save a life that has run its race, and as a candle that has burned down it must go out.

Granny Ryan lingered a few days longer, when the sleep of death came peacefully to her.

Marguerite spoke sweet words of consolation to the old man, while her young heart had a double portion to bear.

We will leave the inmates of the cabin for awhile, alone with their grief.

Mr. Morrell had looked and wished for Roland's return as a father would look for an absent and much loved son; and was glad indeed to welcome him home; the truth was, he was bored with his own company and an important case was on hand.

Their cosy apartments looked brighter than usual to-night, the light from a soft lamp fell on the rich hangings, the polished floors strewn with skins, and the pictured walls, making it an attractive sanctuary.

"Roland, my boy" began Mr. Morrell, "What success? You don't look as well as you might, and you haven't told me anything yet about your trip."

"I've been to a beautiful country, Mr. Morrell, a regular happy hunting ground, plenty of fish and game.

Something about Mr. Morrell's face reminded him of Marguerite, the thought came to him so often that evening to speak of her, but he did not.

Together they spent a pleasant evening, talking of business, society, and on this latter topic, strange to say they agreed for the first time.

Roland had argued heretofore, that there was real pleasure in it, now agreeing with Mr. Morrell that it was a bore, and declaring that he cared nothing more about it, and intended to let it all go and attend with redoubled energy to his profession.

"That reminds me, your sister has prepared a large dinner-party in your honor, which is to take place at an early date."

"That's how my resolve goes to the wind, sister you know, and she is one person I can't refuse."

"She has in view a special pleasure for you, a Miss Templeton, who is all the rage and quite pretty and charming."

And Roland knew it was a wife his sister always had in view for him, and how he would shun this dinner-party if possible.

"Yes a new belle, who has throngs of suitors at her feet, among them a foreign prince, but she rejects them all, her wealth is boundless, and her beauty untold. Now my boy do you think you can withstand a temptation like that?"

Roland laughed and said he thought it useless to try, and would just drop at her feet at once and prevent a failure on his part.

The evening wore away and they retired for the night; as sleep stole gently over Roland's senses, a pair of tearful dark eyes seemed to be looking into his; a warm little arm seemed to steal around his neck. He started up, but dropped back to sleep at last, to awake no more until morning, and when morning came it brought with it only thoughts of Marguerite, for was it not in the early mornings she came over the meadow to the pasture gate? But to-day they were separated, other faces would be around him, other voices reach his ears, but none so sweet, none so dear as Marguerite's.

After breakfast Mrs Zuber came and declared Roland must drive with her for an hour at least, she had something important to say to him, he had always laughed at his sister's "important" things; but he loved his beautiful fashionable sister who had

done so much for him, and was always ready to obey her wishes, so he got in and settled himself beside her: how handsome she was, in a black dress of softest silk and lace, a little Parisian bonnet, a mass of blue forget-me-nots, on her head, nestling down in the golden waves of hair; a fan of pale blue ostritch feathers, waved to and fro in her small hand, which was gloved to perfection in tan suede: she made a pretty picture sinking back in the luxurious cushions of her carriage.

"Ah! how scornful those blue eyes would fall on my Marguerite" thought Roland.

"Now brother I want you to be ever so nice to Miss Templeton, for I'm so anxious you should like her, won't you try just for my sake? It would be a splendid match for you she is just grand, and I know you will like her, won't you that's a darling, I have told her about you."

"All right, dearest sister I shall prepare to fall in love with her at once so don't worry any more about it."

"Now Roland" with a pretty pout, "I am in earnest, so do be serious, are you going to be an old bachelor with all your good looks and good sense, I hope you won't disappoint me and society that way."

"You talk as though I was growing really ancient; but in earnest I will be glad to meet your friend and hope I may be one of her farvored ones."

The drive and chat over, Roland went to his work and Mrs. Zuber home in a flutter of excitement over the dinner party.

A few hours later, the elegant rooms in Mrs. Zuber's palatial residence were fast filling with guests, carriages rolled up the drive and were emptied of daintily clad figures who were ushered into a beautiful room all blue and gold, the hangings of softest India silk in palest blue with Turkish dado of gold, luxurious couches strewn with French embroidered pillows, velvet carpet into which sank the daintily shod feet, and from this apartment

down the broad oaken panelled hall into the double parlors where music floated and gay voices chattered and merry feet kept time to sweet music.

Roland had come early, wishing to please his sister and do all honor to her party. Presently a silence and a murmur of admiration, passed over the party, Miss Templeton had come, at the portiere between hall and parlors she stood, one small hand pushing aside the drapery, a symphony in old pink, the Lyons velvet which composes her dress being slightly trimmed with rich point de Venice lace at the low corsage, and falling away from the rounded arms, the lace enhancing the velvet and the velvet bringing out the fine texture and beautiful pattern of the lace, jeweled pins glistened in her blonde hair and diamonds encircled her white throat. She was beautiful enough for a princess thought Roland, if she had refused to be one. Of course she had many admirers, but at once seemed pleased with Roland's attentions and did not hesitate to show her preference. She was bright and pleasant and Roland laid all prejudice aside, and declared her a charming woman.

So it proved that this evening was the first of many, they were to spend together.

Things could not have gone better, Mrs. Zuber thought.

Roland and Miss Templeton were always together now, balls receptions, concerts, drives, and everybody was holding their breath in expectancy of the announcement of their engagement. But appearances are too often deceiving.

Roland Lee and Miss Templeton who understood one another perfectly, were humoring people and enjoying a very sweet friendship, that had grown stronger, since the day this frank hearted lady told Roland of her betrothal to a noble but poor man, whom she loved dearly, but to please his notion of honor, had promised to wait, while he made a fortune away in California. And Roland had confided in her the story of his love for

the sweet wood-nymph, Marguerite, of how he had tried to forget her, feeling it would be so foreign to his sister's taste, and a strange marriage for him, but how it had been all in vain, and his heart yearned for her still and when winter passed and spring came, he would go again and beg of her to share his life.

Miss Templeton was delighted with the romance of the story, and declared she loved the girl who could make such a sacrifice of her life for the two old people, she must see such a heroine and a visit was to be exchanged when the two weddings should have been consumated.

And he was glad he had told his secret. Together they talked of their happiness and laughed at how people could be so blinded.

But people were beginning to get impatient, the season was almost gone, and Miss Templeton talking of going North again.

What could it mean?

Early one morning, a friend of Mrs. Zuber's came in especially to tell her that Miss Templeton was really going away.

"I will see Roland at once, said Mrs. Zuber, and find out what it all means, he has never confided a word to me; but all seemed to be going on so smoothly, and you know in affairs like that, one does not like to interfere."

So off she bustled, all in a flutter, thinking how Miss Templeton could be so cruel hearted to treat her darling brother so. She expected to find him crushed and down hearted; why had she not gone to comfort him sooner; but then he was so hard to please, it would be just like him to change his mind at the last minute and disappoint her.

Between confiicting emotions she reached the house, was shown into his apartments, and found him alone, calmly reading his paper, but when he saw who has entered. he threw it down and rose with a welcoming smile.

"Good morning, sister dearest!" placing an easy chair for her, "It's real nice of you to stop in and see a fellow, what's the news?" Searching his face closely, she saw in it no trace of sadness, so decided at once it is all Roland's fault, and the heart-broken party is on the other side.

"I hear that Miss Templeton is going away, is it true?"

"I believe she did tell me something of the kind," he replied.

"Why, has the engagement been broken? she asked in astonishment.

"What engagement do you refer to?"

"Now Roland what engagement should I refer to but yours with Miss Templeton?"

"Pshaw, if that is it, it is all a mistaken notion, I will assure you there has never been an engagement between Miss Templeton and myself—never."

"How perfectly horrid you both are to make everyone think so, I shall never again set my heart on anything, I'm sure you love each other, and I don't see why you want to act in such a heartless fashion."

"There you are again deceived, I have the greatest respect and warmest friendship for Miss Templeton—but love—not one spark ever burned in my heart for her."

"But she certainly loves you."

"Now you are again blind my darling sister, for Miss Templeton is engaged and will soon be married to the man she loves, what else can I explain that puzzles your precious brain?" he said pinching her pink ear, as she pouted so becomingly.

"Well I never heard of anything so absurd; Roland, if you are determined to live single, it isn't worth while trying to find a suitable wife for you."

"You are the kindest of sisters, and I know I seem ungrateful, but don't worry," kissing the clouded brow "For when I do

select a woman for my wife it must be one I can love, regardless of wealth and station, for it is the only true marriage and with that alone can I be satisfied."

"When you find your modern Priscilla, I hope you will tell me," she said laughingly and rose to go.

Roland longed to tell her she was already found—but he would not now until her discomfiture over this affair had quieted down.

Ah! how he lived over each day and hour of that happy time and in his dreams looked into soft brown eyes and felt golden brown ringlets blown about his face, and awakened to reality by a fresh wild strain of song, a voice he could never forget, though he should be seperated from it for years to come.

One night as he and Mr. Morrell sat talking together, he felt he must tell him of Marguerite, he would not keep the secret of his love from him longer.

"Mr. Morrell, I have never told you of a bit of romance in connection with my life, and my hunt last smmer."

"No, I'm sure you never have, so let me hear it at once."

Roland took from his purse a small scrap of coarse blue cloth through which ran a few threads of white, making a check, it was a scrap torn by a briar from the bottom of Marguerite's dress during one of their rambles.

"This" he said "Is an extract from a beautiful poem, the remainder of which will be found at the lake, where I spent my holidays last summer. In short, it is a piece of my sweetheart's best dress."

Mr. Morrell put on his glasses and examined the fabric, while Roland finished the story.

"Well!" exclaimed Mr. Morrell "Such a genuine rough diamond as she is, I could fall in love with her myself, and I would rather see you marry a true woman in poverty and rags

my boy, than one with education and wealth, and a heart cold and feelingless as a stone. And are you serious about it? What are your intentions?

"To make her my wife, if she will consent."

"I somehow feel it will be a happy marriage, and may Heaven's blessings be with you."

Roland worked steadily on, looking forward to the coming spring, happy in the thought that it would not be long until he would clasp again to his heart, his Marguerite and they would be happy together again. True she had made him no promise, but he knew she loved him, no doubt of that ever crossed his mind. But he knew how devoted she was to the old people and had said she would never leave them; so he was prepared to provide for them too, for he was what the world called rich.

CHAPTER IV.

HAS THE FLOWER DIED?

Oh! my beloved, wheree'er I turn
Some trace of thee enchants mine eyes;
In every star thy glances burn,
Thy blush on every flowret lies.

Moore.

The busy months soon slip away, Spring is here.

With what pride and delight had Roland built and furnished a house for his wild flower.

The rooms though so different, were alike in that they were all in harmony with the dark beauty, whom he had fondly pictured flitting through them like a beam of sunshine.

We will look into them for a moment only. First a generous hall, a half screened staircase rising on one side, and the light from mullioned windows falls on the paneled wainscot and tinted walls; the broad fireplace of richly carved stone and

wood, the fire of crackling logs, sends out its welcome as we enter. The floor is covered here and there by soft rugs of Eastern texture. Comfort and a sense of welcome are unmistakably expressed. Through the door to the right we enter the library, an informal and charming apartment, where books, music and pictures contribute equally to one's pleasure, a piano and other musical instruments find a place here. A picturesque arrangement of shelves at the side of a small window glazed with leaden glass, where choice bits of pottery, china and bric-a-brac are gathered. The book cases are well filled. The hangings which are of rose India silk and lace, harmonize with the tint of walls and carpet. "Ah!" thought Roland "here we will spend the happiest hours, I will read to her while she sits in that easy-chair, how pretty she will look with her beautiful head against that rose plush, her feet resting there on that ottoman." We will visit the parlor next, and an ideal one we find it. The walls paneled with frames of ebony, filled with velvet of a rich violet color, magnificent mirrors set in here and there in place of the velvet, around the mirrors the ebony is enriched with the most delicate carving. The mantel of marble, and all around the room silver candlesticks of exquisite design, spring from the ebony frames of the panels; the furniture is of ebony with orange damask and violet velvet. Next is Marguerite's own room. With what loving care was this planned and furnished, as an evidence, glance at the hand painted corners of the ceiling, wild flowers, buttercups and marguerites, such as she loved to gather, daintily resting against a gray background; what a cosy, rich look this room has, all furnished in crimson and gold, that couch, that chair, the dainty curtains around the snowy bed, and that soft rug beside it, all spoke of love for Marguerite. Long enough have we lingered, but from garret to cellar a cosier nest would be hard to find.

Now away over river and mountain, into the wild-wood, where stands the little cottage, where a year ago Roland parted with what the world held dearest for him.

A few hours by rail a half day's drive, and he is there, but as he approaches, the hut looks desolate, such a quiet deserted look rests on every thing, a sudden fear comes to him, and he asks himself, could they be gone, Ah! how he had pictured Marguerite recognizing him in the distance and flying with eager feet and beating heart to meet him, how he would clasp her to his heart and claim her his own. Alas! how vain his hopes, he does not yet realize. Yes, the house is desolate, they had moved perhaps to some neighboring house, he would find out by going to the next hut a half mile up the lake, they would probably be there or he would see some one to guide him at once to them; he is growing uneasy and impatient, he reached the place and found it occupied by some strange ignorant people, he inquired at once about the missing family.

"The old witch and her husband, why they are both dead and buried six months ago" they answered.

"The girl Maggie tell me for God's sake where is she."

"God only knows where that child is we don't, a few day's after the old man was buried she was nowhere to be found."

"Has she not friends near to whom she would be likely to go?"

"Not she, after her granny bewitching cows and churns like she did no one would take that chap into their house, they might expect to wake up dead or bewitched if they did, no indeed, she always was a queer critter, floating down the river singing songs all the while."

He found he could learn nothing of her there, and sought other sources for information, but found none; it was in vain he questioned in vain he offered money to those who would give him the slightest trace of her. What a rush of memories came over him as he saw again the familiar places.

"——a thousand bright veined flowers,
From their banks of moss and fern,
Breathe of the sunny hours—
But when wilt thou return?"

With what heaviness of heart did he visit each favored spot, where he had been with Marguerite at his side; the robin's nest, and the hollow tree where bunny made his home a year ago, how with shy eyes a new family peeped at him, and thought of the time when last year's young ones ate nuts from Marguerite's fingers and perched on her shoulders and head, knowing her only as their friend, how each flower she loved spoke to him of her, and the words of White's sweet old song came to him, "I wandered down by the little babbling brook, its every ripple speaks of thee: The roses too they droop their heads, in sympathy with me, Marguerite."

He lingered there for days in the hope that if alive she would return, but at last he could sustain hope no longer, and then he knew how fondly how truly he loved her and how hard it was to give her up. He reproached himself for leaving her there, her sweet face haunted him, he thought how it might have been! but too late now, and in utter despair he returned.

So haggard and worn he looked, that it seemed he had grown old in these few days of sorrow and disappointment. The home he had prepared with such bright hopes for the future, and left with a light heart, he now staggers into, and dropping in the nearest chair, buries his white face in his hands while his form was shaken with grief. Weeks of sickness and delirium followed, everything was a blank to him for days, and his life was despaired of. From his wild ravings his friends partially gathered the truth. Mr. Morrell was greatly grieved; the wound in his own heart over the loss of loved ones had not yet healed, and he could sympathize more deeply with Roland, and could not be reconciled at thought of his death. But Roland did not die. He came slowly back to life again, and with the return of health, the return of hope, if she lived he might yet find her: But like Gabriel in search of Evangeline, rowed down the river, while she lay asleep dreaming of him on its banks; he felt that in this world he might be very near her and still miss finding her at

last, but ever a faint hope lingered, he found himself looking among the crowds from the trains, and every begger girl received a coin for the sake of peering into a bonnet in search of a pair of brown eyes he knew so well; then despair would settle down on him as he thought how the cold waters of the lake might have closed over her long ago.

The house he had prepared was closed, and things were still just as he had placed them, in readiness for her reception; he had large and tempting offers for this beautiful home, but he refused to sell it. For when he parted with it, it would be when the last ray of hope had vanished, and then Ah! then what would life be to him?

He was lost to the world now, his sad story was all that was known of him, it was spoken of as "so novel like" "quite a romance" "she must have been very beautiful."

Marguerite loved and worshiped God; and now on each Sabbath morning you might see Roland Lee with countenance thoughtful and sad, wending his way to the church where he knelt with the worshipers there, and came away with the sweet assurance that he would some day meet Marguerite where there would be no more sad partings.

CHAPTER V.

TRANSPLANTED.

Leaves have their time to fall,
And flowers to wither at the north-wind's breath,
And stars to set——but all,
Thou hast all seasons for thine own, O Death.

Hemans.

The rain came in fitful gusts, against the little cabin, the wind whistled and moaned through each crevice, it was a fearful night outside; crouching over the dying embers, her face buried in a ragged shawl which was drawn over her head, sat Marguerite sobbing bitterly.

It was three days since daddy Ryan was buried, but to this lonely child it seemed that many weeks.

The shock of the old wife's death was too much for the feeble strength of the aged man, he too had suddenly lost his slight hold on life.

These superstitious people had shunned Marguerite as an evil spirit, and she had crept from the lonely grave to her own desolate hearthstone uncomforted and alone.

It was to Roland her thoughts turned after the first outburst of grief, for he, alone, she thought loved her, and if he knew she was left alone, would take care of her; and raising her face to Heaven she breathed a prayer, then going to bed she studied out her plans for to-morrow. She would take the small sum daddy Ryan had left her, go to the city where she might find Roland and tell him she had no one to take care of her and he would love and care for her she knew. So with this thought she waked early next morning; it was still cold but the sun was peeping up and everything bid fair; with a lighter heart than she had known for days, she tied together a few things, and was soon going down the path to the boat-landing, looking about her as she went knowing this may be the last time she will ever look on these familiar places which she has known and loved so long. For sweet child of nature you know this world, but the one beyond this bright blue lake—you know nothing of the joys and sorrows which await you there, your young heart has never felt keen stabs of cruel words, nor known yet what hunger and cold really mean; you are blindly stepping into a future of varied scenes you know nothing of, and go into it with a true and trusting heart, for kindness and love is all you have ever known in your small world.

She does not mind the walk, though many miles lie between her and the station. It is almost dark when she reaches it, and timidly asks for a ticket, saying she wants to go to the city, but

is told the train is gone, and none will be in again until morning—what would she do?

"I will just sit on this seat and wait if you do not mind?"

"No!" growled the man you had better go somewhere else"—she certainly looked an innocent little lady for all her rags, but he knew people were sometimes not so innocent as they appeared.

"I haven't anywhere to go," she answered humbly. But seeing his stern look she picked up her bundle and went outside. A bad judge of human nature who could find guilt in such a face as hers; but he coldly walked away leaving our heroine to spend the night on the doorstep. She said God would take care of her and trustingly laid her head on her bundle and slept until morning. Her healthy body and vigorous nature soon rebounded from sorrow and fatigue, and she was bright and hopeful again.

On board the train, she looked out the window and enjoyed the new scenes, as she sped away she knew not where. A few hours ride a shrill whistle and the train stopped at the depot in the city of D——, crowds of people pressed in and others out, and such was the confusion, Marguerite was so unaccustomed to, she scarcely knew which way to turn, and wondered if this was the place, should she get off here? surely Roland lives further away, why she seemed to have just started, so quickly she came; she was on the steps of the car hesitating what to do. Only one step to the platform, and she would have landed safely there with Roland, in the very refuge of loving hands and a longing heart. But alas! it was ordered differently. The train had brought her too swiftly, and his home to her seemed so far away; she wavered a moment turned into the car and took her seat again.

Why had the spark of hope in Roland's heart grown so bright for a moment that day when the shrill whistle of that train caught his ear and he felt he could write no longer, throwing down his work he walked in the direction of the

depot, peering into the conveyances, and at the people on foot, but all in vain, and he again retraced his steps and took up his work.

Marguerite leaned her pretty head back on the soft cushion, and would have enjoyed it but for sad thoughts of the dead and her lonely condition. Tears filled her eyes and stole down her cheeks; she sat there all unconscious of how beautiful she looked and the admiring glances of the passengers, for she was lost in sad thought. Presently the conductor came through taking the tickets, Marguerite had given hers before and had not gotten another, not knowing that it only brought her so far. Had she known, she would have gotten off, as her money was very limited, and she was beginning to feel hungry.

"Where do you want to go?" asked the conductor seeing she had no ticket.

"To a large city where I have a friend."

"You mean the city of F—— well that's a night's run, don't guess you want a sleeper, the fare please—two dollars."

She counted her money and did not have it, he watched her, and said.

"Oh! well you haven't it, you had better get off at the next station," and passed on. In a few minutes the train stopped at a small village, Marguerite's heart sank, she felt sure Roland did not live there, but saw no hope of going furthur as the conductor said to her.

"Come this is the place, hurry up, only five minutes here."

"If you please, sir, will you take this bundle and the money, it isn't much, but it is all I have and I know my friend doesn't live here, so please may I go on?"

He looked at the bundle and smiled; an old gentleman in a seat behind her, heard their conversation, and handing over the fare said: "Let her stay on."

Marguerite turned on him her sad eyes so full of thankfulness, he felt already repaid. He soon noticed that her tired head was pillowed on her bundle and she was sleeping sweetly. One arm thrown above her head and the long curls falling over it; and as he gazed in admiration at the innocent childlike face, a little sigh escapes her lips, and a shiver ran through her frame; he carefully laid his great coat over her thinly clad form, she stirred, and her pretty mouth wreathed itself in smiles in her dreams.

Morning came and soon the great city of F—— where our heroine is to step from the train into a world yet unknown, like a Southern flower transplanted into a Northern clime, where blighting winds and snow, replace the warm sunshine and balmy air of the South.

With as much grace as any high born lady might, she thanked the old gentleman for his kindness, put her shawl over her head and disappeared in the crowd. She soon began to feel very hungry, but she would keep on awhile, for if she could find Roland she thought he would take her to his home and give her something nice to eat; so she walked on looking up at the many storied houses, until she began to think it would not be so easy to find Roland after all, she realized that the city was very large, and she too remembered there was more than one city, and a doubt entered her mind if this was the right one. Her task soon became irksome and hopeless, she wished herself back again in the hut by the lake, the world seemed so large, there were so many people, and not one of them she knew, and not one to care for her. At last exhausted she sank down on a stone step and began to cry, many of the people who passed by offered her money, and she knew they thought her a begger girl, but she didn't want money and would shake her head. It was friends of which she now felt the need. Many were the admiring glances of those who passed her by that day; her beauty was of an uncommon type, and strange to say this uncultivated girl, attracted

those whose taste for the beautiful had been cultivated. A handsomely dressed lady and her millionaire husband stopped to admire her, the lady remarked, "How I would like to see that girl in a ruby velvet gown, what a picture she would make, a pity she has to go on the streets and beg."

An artist hurrying on his way, caught sight of her classic profile and stopped to sketch her while she leaned wearily against a post: saying to himself, "A figure like that isn't met up with every day."

Marguerite was murmuring a prayer to Heaven for help, when a voice from a carriage quite close called to her, "Little girl, please come nearer!" Oh, mamma, isn't she beautiful!" a ray of hope, she went hastily to the glittering carriage, where a lady and her daughter peered out at her with words and smiles of admiration. "Oh mamma, let us take her home with us?"

"You forget yourself my daughter, waifs from the gutter are not fit for our home," and a coin was tossed out as the carriage rolled on. The silver lay unheeded as Marguerite walked sadly away. Thus the day wore away.

CHAPTER VI.

CULTIVATED.

Let fate do her worst; there are relics of joy,
Bright dreams of the past which she cannot destroy;
Which comes in the night time of sorrow and care,
And bring back the features that joy used to wear.

Moore.

We will not attempt to crowd into this brief story, the details of our heroine's adventures, in the few days spent wandering homeless in the city.

All through the first day, her childish faith clung to the belief, that she would find Roland there, and to her trusting heart he would be a refuge from all trouble. She was too much a child and understood too little of the world and its ways, to feel any hesitancy or impropriety of throwing herself on Roland's mercy, or doubting his willingness to take care of her. But after a day of disappointment, hunger and cold, she knew she must do something besides wander there looking for him, so she tried all next day for work and found that willingness to do, was not all that was required to secure a place; experience and recommendations were needed, and she had neither.

Hard were her trials, and as night came on again, she felt she must surely die alone, although surrounded by a surging sea of humanity, she would make one more appeal, she saw a kind-faced woman in a little shop near by, and stopped to ask if she could give her work. No, she said it was mid-winter, trade dull, and nothing to require another hand. Marguerite still pleaded weren't there dishes to wash, rooms to sweep, she would work for just a place to stay, it was so lonely and cold in the street, but no, it was no use, and she went out again into the windy night. It was now almost nine o'clock, the streets were bright with electric lights and the places she passed looked inviting and warm inside, she felt herself almost warmed at sight of them. Music catches her ear, she stops a moment, it is before a concert hall, she goes to the door, then she sees a flight of stairs which lead up to where the music is, she remembered how Roland talked of the beautiful singers, how he told her she might be one if she was taught, and curious to hear, she glided noislessly up the broad stairway, and sat down to listen, forgetting herself and all her surroundings, forgetting her hunger and cold, in listening to what seemed to her the voices of the angels in Heaven floating over her head, she felt should she raise her eyes she would surely see them; but instead her head drooped lower and lower, until it rested on the step, her eyes were closed in slumber and beautiful visions of Heaven and

lost loved ones. How long she slept, she knew not, but when consciousness came, she thought she was not dreaming, she must be in another world than that where the winds were so cold, and the people so unkind, for she heard sweet kind voices so close about her, and felt warm and comfortable, she dreaded to open her eyes lest it should all vanish and leave her again to the merciless world.

Isn't she beautiful, just like a picture, look at her hair and what pretty dimpled arms and tapering fingers.

"Yes," answered another voice. "She might be a princess in disguise."

"If I knew she could sing I would adopt her at once," said another.

"Just like you, Mildred, people as charitable as you, should keep an orphan asylum, instead of a conservatory of music."

Maggie felt the jostling of the crowd and knew she had been asleep, and it was the people coming from the concert, she raised herself in a half wild and startled manner, turning on those about her such eyes as one seldom sees, they went straight to the heart of Madam Vargrave, who asked her name, where she lived and soon learned her sad story; at its conclusion, she placed her own warm cloak around Marguerite, taking her with her into her carriage, and Madam Vargrave's friends could not blame her much, she had always been very charitable; she had come to the city of F—— some years age, and held the position of vocalist in the leading conservatory, and lived in a cosy little cottage on a fashionable street, every one loved the kind sad faced lady, and every thing she did always seemed right.

This proved an end to Marguerite's troubles, she found here a very happy home, and a strong friendship grew up between them, Madam Vargrave soon began to think she could not get along without Marguerite. At first she had her help in the dining room, but grew so fond of her she could no longer let her

take a servant's place. Although Marguerite was very happy and grateful in her position, she was happier when she was sent to school, and learned so rapidly that Mrs. Vargrave was very proud of her and gave her still better advantages. Mrs. Vargrave went out early to her place of duty, came home for lunch and went back again. As she came in one day earlier than usual, she heard a strange sweet melody coming from the direction of Marguerite's room. She walked softly to the half closed door and saw Maggie sitting alone with her eyes filled with tears, and singing such sad sweet strains as only she and the birds can sing. This was the first time Mrs. Vargrave had heard her voice and she was struck with its unusual sweetness. A moment thus and Madam entered so softly and folded the girl in her arms, almost before she knew any one was near. She had been thinking of loved and lost ones. Madam understood her loneliness and consoled her as a gentle mother would do.

"Tell me, Marguerite what is it that makes you sad?"

"Auntie Mildred, forgive me, you have done so much for me here, I could not ask for more; but while I sat here all alone looking out of the window, somehow the day and the perfume from those violets on the table there brought it all back, such a happy evening I spent with some one long ago and Auntie if he were only here I would be perfectly happy. But Auntie, I love you and am grateful for all you do for me."

"Yes, dear, I know you love me and I'm sorry to see you cling to some one who is perhaps not worthy of you, or has long ago forgotten you."

She had often spoke of Roland Lee to Madam, who had little faith that he meant to be true to Marguerite, she wished to erase him from her mind if possible.

"Oh! if you only knew him and could once look into his honest blue eyes, you would not say he was not true."

"Well dear, never mind about that now, but would you like to have your voice cultivated?"

Arms about her neck and dozens of kisses answered Yes—and from this time on, life was a blissful reality to Marguerite; Madam through those few notes heard a voice she knew was capable of almost anything to which a voice could attain, and Marguerite took the deepest interest and applied herself closely for she remembered Roland had wished she might learn to sing; so she proved a diligent student, and when Madam saw how she applied herself and bent every energy to her studies, she looked further in the future for her to a time when she would bring her before her friends and see their surprise at the fine voice of the little beggar girl they had watched asleep on the steps descending from Harmony Hall.

Mrs. Vargrave had grown to love Maggie very much, and when she looked at her beautiful face and perfect figure, she knew sometime when she was an accomplished young lady she would have lovers as other girls, and she spoke to her of such things; but Maggie would say, No she would have no lover but Roland Lee and Madam would tell her she was then a child and the friendship he had shown her, was doubtless just to pass away a few idle moments, he perhaps was married by now, and if not, he may have forgotten her, and when she would see the sad disappointed look that would pass over her face, she would wish to please her by saying, she would have a lover some day that she would think more of than Roland Lee.

Marguerite would shake her head and run away to hide the tears.

The thought that Roland had forgotten her was a bitter one. And when the sound of some heart breaking song whose plaintive strains seemed to come from the depths of a disappointed heart reached Madams ears, she knew too well her words had only awakened afresh the memory of one she wished her to forget.

The mind will in its worst despair, still wander o'er the past, on moments of delight that were too beautiful to last."

The day's duties over the good nights said, and in the seclusion of her own chamber, a little white robed figure knelt each night in prayer. And one petition never failed to ascend a blessing always asked for Roland Lee

A few, Ah! would there were many—as faithful.

CHAPTER VII.

APPRECIATED.

A voice soft and sweet as a tune that one knows
Something in her there was, set you thinking of those
Strange backgrounds of Raphael . . that hectic and deep
Brief twilight in which Southern suns fall asleep.
Lucile.

Five years have flown by and wrought many changes, as we look again at our hero and heroine, fortune has smiled on Roland in the way of worldly possessions, he is wealthy, but a few gray hairs are scattered through the fair locks in his temples, and his face wears a settled sadness.

It is a warm Spring morning, and reminds Roland of such a day long ago. He and Mr. Morrell are starting on a professional tour, they are warmer friends than ever, and each quite necessary to the other's happiness.

Marguerite has finished her studies and laid them aside, she is now the world in society around which the smaller planets revolve, her voice alone would win worshipers at her shrine, but added to that is an uncommon beauty, her long curls no longer blow about her shoulders; but are smoothly made into a fashionable coiffure on top of her shapely head, her complexion is free from any hint of sun burn, leaving the roses in the fairest of cheeks, her figure has gracefully rounded into that of a woman,

her eyes are still the same trustful brown ones which go to the heart of those they rest on, and stamp all she says with sincerity.

This is the evening of a charity concert, Marguerite is to sing, which announcement is enough to crowd the house to its utmost capacity.

There is nothing delights her more, than to assist in work for the poor, she enters into it with her whole sympathetic soul.

Just now she is putting on the last touches to her toilet, and she is not thinking of the poor or the concert, No! but to her mind something more important still, something which causes her to forget for a time every thing else, and think more seriously than ever before. She has promised to answer Yes, or No, to that great question in every girl's life.

Eugene Vontress, a wealthy bachelor, had fallen in love with Marguerite when she sang at her first concert, and he has been her constant adorer ever since then, and pleads now for a favorable answer, she did not love him and had told him this, but he like many others, believed he could win her love when once she was his own; true he was an elegant gentleman, and considered a good match for any one, Marguerite was sorry, she could not give Roland Lee up forever and love some one else, and after all she thought she might do so she had the greatest respect for this man, and Mrs. Vargrave desired her to accept him; but again her heart sank, her decision wavered. If Roland did love her, if he would only come to her, and the memory of his last words, that he would come again, and the blue eyes were before her so true, the memory of it all came to her as a refreshing shower to April flowers, an oasis in the desert in which she felt herself wandering, but on the other hand came the thought, should she be so selfish? it was her desire not to marry Eugene Vontress, or any one but Roland, but she thought of those who had done so much for her, and to whom she owed her very life, it was but right she should sacrifice her own feelings and desires for theirs, and true it might be as Mrs. Vargrave had said, it was long ago she had seen

Roland, she was then a child, and perhaps it was only a fancy of hers that he loved her; her mind was made up she would marry Eugene Vontress, no matter what came of it, but she would tell him of Roland Lee first. The bell rings, he is here, and she must go down. As she entered, he went forward eagerly and caught her hand in his, while he surveyed her from head to foot; how her fresh beauty seemed to strike him as never before, in this simple costume of pure white India silk "the clinging robes fell around the perfect limbs and seemed as though they loved the form they cherished."

"Marguerite, my darling," he pleaded "you have kept me waiting for so long a time, say you will be mine and let me place this on your finger," he said showing her a beautiful diamond. "Not now" she begged with sweet shyness, "I have something to tell you first" and she told him about Roland Lee and his visit to their humble home, and how she had always believed in his love for her, but he only laughed at her romantic childish notion, and told her she must know too much of the world by now, to believe that he loved her or meant what he said, so she again thought she might be mistaken, for his words were just like Auntie's, so she allowed him to place the sparkling diamond on her finger, but as he drew her nearer to press the first kiss on her cheek, she remembered one that was passionately pressed there long ago, and she drew away, whispering not yet, as before.

Roland Lee and Mr. Morrell, had arrived in the city of F—— on the evening train from D—— They sat smoking at the hotel De Maverick across from Harmony Hall, the concert had begun and the music attracted their attention.

"That's a good voice!" exclaimed Roland, "Let us go over?" agreed, and they walked leisurely across finishing their cigars and listening to the music, but when they entered the door Roland grasped Mr. Morrell's arm so firmly, he turned to see him pale and startled.

"My God!" he cried "it has the same wild pathos, it can be no other, it is her voice—her voice," he cried excitedly and sprang up the steps in his eagerness to see the singer.

"Impossible, my boy," said Mr. Morrell trying to bring him to reason again, and when Roland saw the singer, he could see no likeness in this superb creature to his tanned and ragged little beauty ; so in silence they were seated, but as the voice rang out clear and sweet again, he knew it must be the same, it had the same wild sweet melody. Could it be hers? Slowly raising his eyes he found Marguerite's resting steadily on him and for one instant their eyes met; "My Marguerite," he whispered. She turned pale as death and for a moment faltered, an anxious feeling went through her hearers, she seemed to be losing her composure, "Will she fail?" What can be the matter! but in an instant the feeling passed, a flush overspread her face, she regained her composure and sung the remaining strains as she had never sung before, an encore long and enthusiastic, followed; Would she not return? Surely she must, but she did not, the concert was finished without her—for all behind the scenes was confusion, Marguerite was faint, sick, she was trembling and white, she must go home, so she was tenderly lifted into the carriage, and Mrs. Vargrave and Eugene Vontress with anxious faces saw her safely home. All she wanted was quiet and rest and they left her alone as she desired, after being left alone she sat up and began thinking of what had happened, Roland was really here, he had recognized her, oh! how near she came failing, how her breath seemed to stop when she raised her eyes to his, she longed to rush to him, but she was no longer a child, and besides why was she so foolish, perhaps he had given her no thought since they separated, perhaps he was married, five long years had passed by, but something in his look made her heart still hope, then she reasoned that the look was because she was so changed, and had grown so much taller, now her gowns were made by a stylish dress-maker, then granny Ryan made

them. Oh! happy days; and now she knew more of the world and it wasn't all true as it appeared to her then, Yes, they must be right, and she resolved to be more sensible; getting up from her chair quite ashamed of her behavior, she slipped through the parlor door through which she saw Aunty and Eugene sitting with wondering anxious faces, which amused her, she burst in upon them with a merry laugh which gave them both a start, she told them it was only nervousness and had all passed off and she was quite well again. Mr. Vontress soon said good-night and when gone, she told Auntie Mildred all about it and showed her the ring Eugene Vontress had placed on her finger, saying, "Now Auntie, if Roland should be true?"

Next day a card was brought her, and she read the name "Roland Lee," it almost dropped from her fingers. At first she felt she could never meet him indifferently or as an old friend; but only as her dear Roland of long ago, but she remembered how many years had passed by, and how many changes might have taken place in his heart since he told her he loved her, so she strove to hide every emotion that might betray her true feeling for him, and meet him indifferently as an old friend.

Roland too remembered the changes that might have been made in her heart, he had noticed the diamond sparkling on her finger and the news of her engagement had reached his ears, but still he could not tear himself away without seeing her even though her heart and hand were promised to another, and her presence would only awaken afresh his old love all in vain.

With every nerve strained for composure he mets Marguerite in a formal greeting, took her cold hand in his, talked of different things and asked how she likes city life; she replied in a dangerous way for him.

"Oh! I like it, but I sometimes long for a glimpse of my old life again, to be once more in my boat on the lake and have one long tramp in the fresh wild woods." She had said too

much and her lips trembled, he wondered—he hoped she was thinking of those rambles and boat rides with him.

"But you would not exchange the new life for the old?"

"Yes, if it were possible, but that cannot be, there is no one left there now," and tears gathered in her eyes. Roland was angry with himself and wished he had not dared so much, but he doubted if she was quite happy and he must know.

"For old friendship's sake will you not tell me how your change came about?"

Could he but know of those long weary days she spent looking for him, her face grew crimson she felt he was waiting for an answer, she could not tell him and her face drooped down in confusion, he wondered at her, for her old self was all frankness, but he went on determined to know the truth.

"I hope my friend is quite happy here?"

Glad of anything to evade the former question she answered quickly. "Oh! Yes, I'm very happy," but she sighed and tears stood in her eyes. Her heart was always touched with thoughts of the past and now she felt she could stand it no longer.

"You must be very happy," ventured Roland longing to hear it from her own lips if she loved another.

"You are I am told, betrothed to one who loves you devotedly and you are soon to be a happy bride,"

This was more than she could bear.

Oh! Mr. Lee I do not love him how can you be so unkind!" and she hid her face in her hands and burst into tears, Roland bent over her, his heart beat fast, what joy these words and tears brought to him.

Can it be true, my darling, my own Marguerite, that you love me still? My heart has been breaking for you these long weary years." And pressing her to his heart he kissed the tears away and begged further assurance that she still loved him. Laying her warm cheek against his own, she told him of the

long weary hours spent in search of him and her trials after leaving the old place, then he knew how true she had been. Her heart was full of joy and sorrow, when he told her how he had gone for her to the cottage and found it deserted, and after so many years her voice had at last guided him to her.

"I knew not then that fate had lent
Such tones to one of mortal birth;"
I knew not then that Heaven had sent
A voice, a form like thine on earth!"

And now she would soon be all his own, for had he not loved her longer than anyone else; she then remembered her promise and the ring, and a shadow crossed her face as she involuntarily glanced at the hand on which she wore it.

"It is true you are engaged?"

"Yes, this ring was placed here last night."

"But you will not marry him, Marguerite?"

"No, I cannot, I told him of you."

"Brave, true hearted little girl. But are you sure you do not love him, Margie?"

"Oh! yes, I'm quite sure of that, and have told him often," she replied in her old, honest fashion. So many things they had to say to each other, that before Roland left, his formal call had lengthened into several hours, ere he said good bye until to-morrow, when he would come again and bring with him his partner who had shared his sorrows, and now must share his joy.

CHAPTER VIII.

A MARGUERITE IN FULL BLOOM.

"Oh! joy, oh rapture unforseen
The clouded sky is now serene."

Pinafore.

Marguerite went with flying feet through the house, up the stairs, into the dining room, sitting room, slamming doors behind her in a frenzy of delight, in search of Madame Vargrave, coming upon her in the little study, she threw her arms around her neck in a fashion to take away her breath.

"Oh! Aunty, he has really come!"

"Who has come? You have almost frightened my senses away."

"Roland, Aunty and he loves me still, and I'm going to be his wife, and it's all so lovely."

This came all in one last breath and she stood panting with her hand on her fluttering heart, and cheeks glowing like live coals.

"Well, Marguerite you certainly look like a romping child just now, and not my dignified young lady," and she thought "those eyes are surely hers" and just now she could not find it in her heart to throw a damper on such joy as this, however, much she thought and feared lest it should be an unsuitable marriage; who might this Roland Lee be? who knew if he was a suitable husband for this pure girl, and she shuddered at the thought of him being otherwise when she saw how Marguerite had wrapt her affections about him.

"Aunty, he is coming again to-morrow, and you will see him and like him, and his partner is coming with him; you know Roland has told him about me and he wants to see me," and she chatted away in this happy fashion.

"I must send Mr. Vontress the ring, poor Eugene, but he won't mind very much, I know," and she was gone as quickly as she came, nothing could daunt her now, sending the ring back was a mere trifle with her.

"I feel helpless. What can I do? what is best?" sighed Mrs. Vargrave. "To turn such a torrent of love as Marguerite has in her heart for that man, is something that baffles me, to forbid it would ruin her happiness, for I know her well and know her love is no light thing; but I will wait until I see him and hope for the best."

Mrs. Vargrave dreaded this meeting more than she could tell, Marguerite had given glowing descriptions of him, but if he should be unworthy of Marguerite, she could never give her consent to their marriage, and it would cause the first difference between them, and that was a bitter thought, still she could not see one who had grown as dear to her as her own child, link herself with one beneath her.

Next day at the appointed time, Roland and Mr. Morrell came. Mrs. Vargrave was nervous; Marguerite was in a flutter of delight, and felt like running into the hall as they entered, but maintained her dignity with an effort by squeezing Auntie Mildred's hand until she almost screamed.

Roland entered first and was introduced to Mrs. Vargrave who with a look of surprise at this spendid specimen of manhood, took his outstretched hand in a cordial welcome, and turned for an introduction to his partner—but with bewildered staring eyes she stood trembling and pale. He looked as though a spirit from the other world had suddenly appeared.

"Alfred!" she cried.

"Mildred, my wife!" and they were clasped in each others' arms, Marguerite and Roland only half understood the scene, and looked at each other for an explanation, Roland spoke first.

"Mr. Morrell's lost wife!"

"Can it be true this is Auntie's husband? The joys your coming has brought us." Yes, it was true husband and wife were re-united.

The greetings and exclamations over, then they each told of their escape from a watery grave, after the ship in which they sailed for America went down; and of course a great deal was to be talked over of their life since then, so Marguerite and Roland slipped off to the study unnoticed, leaving them to enjoy themselves together, and all there seemed lacking to make their happiness complete, was the absence of their little daughter Mabel.

Mr. Morrell gave such a good account of Roland that Mrs. Vargrave was relieved of all her anxious feelings concerning their union.

The hours slipped by unheeded—until Marguerite and Roland entered again, and with smiles and mysterious looks seated themselves, Marguerite dropping on a low seat by Mrs. Vargrave—clasping her arms about her, looking earnestly into her face and occasionally stealing a sly glance at Mr. Morrell.

Roland began; Marguerite brought with her from her old home on the lake, some old documents which Mr. Ryan left in her care when he died. She gave them to me this evening to look over, and here is something I find which will interest you both, in fact, all of us; he produced an old paper and began reading.

"The winter of 18— my wife Mary Ryan and myself got aboard the Nueces at ——— bound for America; there was among other passengers a lady and gentleman, accompanied by a little child, the names were Mr. and Mrs. and Mabel Morrell.

On the night of the 28th of December 18—, a fearful storm wrecked the vessel. A few escaped, but most of the crew and passengers were drowned. My wife and I were among the ones taken into the life boat. We were but a few minutes in our small craft tossing helplessly about, when the ship we had

abandoned, sunk. Soon afterwards we saw by a blaze of lightening something floating near us, and recognized at once the dark curls that rose on the waves to be those of little Mabel Morrell the pet of every one aboard, and we at once turned every effort in the direction of saving her, and succeeded. When first taken in she seemed past doing anything for, but we felt her heart beat faintly, and one of the sailors had a flask of brandy, with which we rubbed her wrists, and then forced a few drops between her teeth, after which she soon regained consciousness. We were driven about and tossed helplessly on the waves till day break, when the storm had calmed down, and we saw not far away a large ocean steamer. After attracting the attention of those on its deck, they took us aboard, the Steamer was bound for the United States. My wife and I took the best care of little Mabel and grew more and more attached to her, and when we landed there seemed no more rightful owner to her than Mary and I. So we brought her with us here to our little home and have cared for her as best we could, so long that she seems like our own child, we grew afraid that some relative might hear she was alive and come for her, so we changed her name to ours and her given name to Maggie, "Maggie Ryan." She has been our only comfort and joy, but we are old and when we pass away there may be no one to care for her, and we write this that she may know who her parents are."

Marguerite's clasp had grown tighter around her mother, and her head was pillowed on her bosom and glad tears shone in her eyes, but it was the father beside her now, kissing her forehead and turning her sweet face up—to find there the same sweet eyes of his little daughter and hear her exclaim affectionately: "My father and mother!"

Roland quietly left them to enjoy a glad re-union of a long separated family.

On the following day, after arrangments were made for an

early wedding, Roland went home again, had everything put in readiness at his elegant little home where he was to return with his bride, and it was not long until he was on his way to the city of F—— again.

Mrs. Zuber was surprised and delighted, at this beautiful and accomplished creature, of whom Roland had always spoken of as his nut brown beauty— his wild flower, and could this superb creature with real live complexion through which the warm red glowed in cheeks and lips, soft brown eyes and wavy locks on temples and brow be the same?

Roland's careworn and sad look had vanished, and he seemed again himself young and happy, and his proudest, happiest moment was when he led his beautiful bride, into their home and saw the expressions of delight and appreciation of everything, when he told her it had been ready and waiting for her for five long years, she realized how great his love was, and putting her arms around his neck, lifting her rosy mouth for a kiss, he was repaid for waiting had the length of time been twice that many years.

The following summer they visited the spot of their first meeting, Marguerite's old home on the lake, where many pleasant and to Marguerite many sad memories arose.

Roland had the resting places of the old people marked by marble pillars, and Marguerite's hands planted flowers about their graves.

All the old familiar paths were traversed, the same nodding flowers grew along the way; the ferns in the glens as fresh, the violets filling the air with perfume as sweet, the frogs croaked as loud, and it looked the self same crow with its jet black plumage and hard glistening beak, that cawed at them from the dead cedar, when they sat there on the rocks that warm summer day so many years ago.

At Roland's earnest request, Marguerite dressed herself in the short ragged frock she had worn when he first saw her, turned her brown curls loose to the wind, pushed herself out on the lake in a rough canoe, and standing against the brown rocks as he had seen and loved her first, he had her portrait made in oil.

It now occupies a conspicuous place on their study wall, and and the inscription beneath is "Marguerite, or a wild flower."

THE END.

PRICE 15 CENTS.

MARGUERITE

. . . OR . . .

A WILD FLOWER.

BY

ROSE ANNA LEIGH.

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